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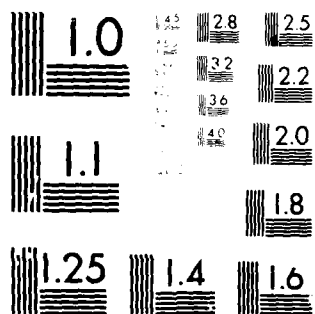
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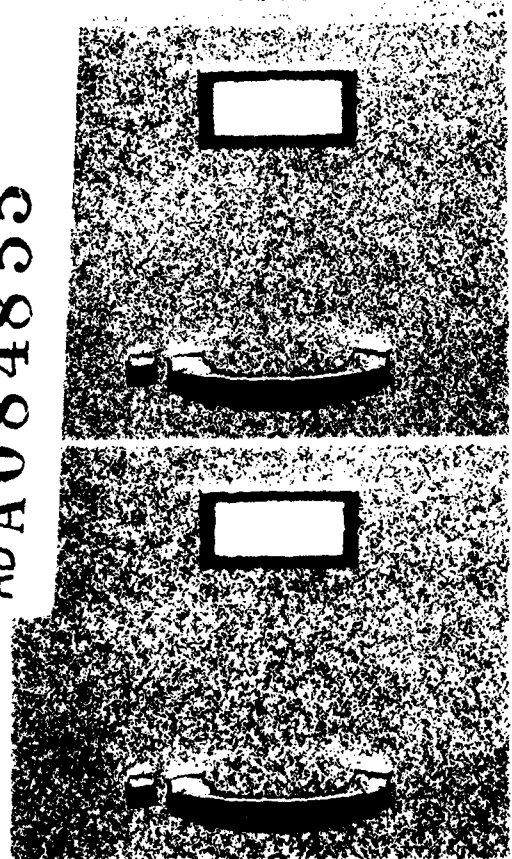
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6 A SOVIET NAVY FOR THE NUCLEAR AGE

by

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Commander Steve F. Kime USN

Faculty Research Fellow
The National War College

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The National Security Affairs Issue Papers

This paper is one of a series of brief research studies on national security issues. The series supplements the National Security Affairs Monographs, which are lengthier studies of more general interest. Papers in both series are researched and written by the Research Fellows, faculty, students, and associates of The National Defense University and its component institutions, The National War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

The purpose of this series is to contribute new insights and background materials to national security policymakers and to others concerned with the many facets of US national security.

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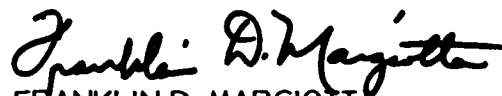
FOREWORD

As Director of Research at The National Defense University (NDU), I am pleased to preface an interesting piece of research while introducing a new series of research publications: the NDU National Security Affairs Issue Papers.

This series will join our NDU Press books, monographs, and NDU Research Reports as another category of publication by which to communicate research findings to the Government's national security policy community and others interested in US national security issues. As our research program progressed over the last few years, the need arose for a medium to accommodate meaningful research results which might be shorter in length than a monograph or book or which might appeal to specialized audiences. We developed the National Security Affairs Issue Paper series to meet that need.

In this ~~(first issue)~~ paper, a continuing topic of concern to US security policymakers is addressed--the growing qualitative and quantitative improvements in the Soviet military establishment. Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of this trend has been the marked improvement in the strengths and capabilities of the Soviet Navy, which, as the author notes, has undergone a revolution. Commander Steve Kime has published several earlier pieces about Soviet maritime affairs. In this issue paper he provides a useful perspective on current Soviet naval initiatives by tracing the historical development of the Russian Navy to its current status as a formidable nuclear force with global reach. In fact, as the study suggests, it is a force which challenges the national will of the United States to remain the world's leading seapower. ←

We are hopeful that our NDU National Security Affairs Issue Papers will analyze and highlight important security issues such as those suggested by Commander Kime in this first of our new series. If we are successful in our plans, then this series will provide another source of intellectual challenge and ideas for the ongoing and always important dialogue which enables our democratic society to make rational policy choices in a rapidly changing world.



FRANKLIN D. MARGIOTTA
Colonel, USAF
Director of Research

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Commander Steve F. Kime, USN, received his M.P.A. in national security policy and Ph.D. in Soviet and international affairs from Harvard University. A submariner, he has served as Assistant Naval Attache to the Soviet Union and in the Defense Intelligence Agency. He is currently on the Faculty of The National War College and a Faculty Research Fellow of The National Defense University. Commander Kime has published a monograph and several articles about US and Soviet sea power issues.

A SOVIET NAVY FOR THE NUCLEAR AGE

Although the Imperial Russian Navy had some glorious moments and the modern Soviet Navy has become ever more visible, naval power has never played a primary role in either the Russian or the Soviet scheme of things. The Soviet Navy is only part of a vast, highly integrated array of continental and intercontinental military power, and Soviet military power is viewed by Soviet leaders as only one element of a broad "correlation" of political, economic, and military forces in the world. There is no question, however, that military power is critical in this Soviet view of the world, and that the Soviet Navy has managed to flourish.

In fact, the Soviet Navy has undergone a revolution. Its missions and its composition have changed dramatically as the implications of the nuclear age have been understood and past limitations on Russian naval power have been mitigated. While its relative position in the Soviet military pecking order does not appear to have enjoyed similarly dramatic change, the Soviet Navy's emergence as an important foreign policy instrument and its accepted role as a vital element of the strategic nuclear balance make it a powerful claimant on resources. Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Sergei Gorshkov, the leader and spokesman of the Soviet Navy for a quarter of a century, has had to justify his programs to a military and civil hierarchy that is not "naturally" disposed to things naval. But he has had something to sell. How the navy of a traditionally continental military power arrived at a position where it commands a significant portion of a large defense budget, and how that navy has evolved into a nuclear-age force, are the subjects of this paper.

An Historical Perspective

Russia is usually thought of in terms of its enormous continental land expanses and its long and varied land frontiers. The country would be an inescapable factor in the military aspects of geopolitical thought even if it were neither a great industrial power nor a nuclear superpower in the contemporary alignment of world forces.

The same is not true of Soviet maritime power. Historians and students of military affairs before the advent of modern nuclear-missile technology can find few reasons to consider Russia significant in calculations about the mastery of the seas. Russian seapower had little to do with power considerations in the world at large. Navy Commander in Chief Kuznetsov's assertion in 1954--"the Soviet Union is a great seapower--of the 65,000 kilometers of USSR borders, 47,000 are sea frontiers . . ."--had a hollow ring to it at the time, because he could support it with only a moderately respectable naval history where geopolitical limitations weighed heavily on naval development.¹

Note: A condensed version of this paper appeared in Parameters: Journal of the US Army War College, March 1980.

The roots of Russian naval history barely reach into the seventeenth century. The exceptions to this are so far removed in time that they do not link up with modern developments in any coherent way. The exploits of Vangarian princes in their attempts against Byzantium in the ninth and tenth centuries,² in addition to being unsuccessful, left no lasting maritime imprint upon the Russian mind. Although river transport has always been basic to the Russian economy, there were no clear manifestations of naval power in the six centuries between the Vangarian princes' exploits and Peter the Great (1672-1725).

Senior Soviet naval officers and other Soviet naval publicists often recount a glorious naval heritage after Peter founded the forerunner of the current Soviet Navy.³ It is true that the tsarist navy had its bright moments. There were notable victories and successful deployments outside adjacent closed seas, as well as the uninspiring, even calamitous role of the navy in the Russo-Japanese War and in World Wars I and II, a role often cited by Western historians. We cannot recount all the ups and downs of this complex history, but it is worthwhile to note some of the realities which affected Russian naval power.

The Imperial Russian Navy was never a "blue water" force that could, by virtue of the power embodied in itself, represent the continental power of Russia at great distances from the Eurasian periphery. While the navy's role as an adjunct to ground forces was important in local wars against nearby powers such as Sweden and Turkey, Russia had to adjust its expression of naval power away from its own shores to a political and military balance of power that Russia never dominated. More "legitimate" or traditional maritime powers had to lend support, or at least acquiesce, in order for the Russian Navy to act effectively in areas even as close as the Mediterranean Sea.

By the time Russia entered the twentieth century, soon to make an attempt to behave like a great naval power in the debacle against Japan, it had accumulated a spotty naval tradition. The Russian Navy had never alone engaged an enemy fleet where long, independent communications were involved. Russia had made it a practice to act on the high seas only in cooperation with others. Major Russian naval engagements had almost always been primarily amphibious-type operations or operations in relatively close support of land forces. Russian naval power, in short, had always lacked credibility when it was extended beyond the Baltic and Black Seas; and the Pacific had been neglected. Under the tsars, Russian naval power had been much more important as a symbolic tool of foreign policy than it was as a decisive military instrument which could turn foreign policy goals into international political realities.

The Initial Setting for Soviet Naval Policy

Early Russian naval proponents could do little about the geopolitical and military realities which dictated a subordinate position for naval forces. Even Peter and Catherine, both strong Russian Navy supporters, could not change the geographic, economic, and politicomilitary milieu in which naval power had to be expressed. Two World Wars then seemed to confirm that, awesome as Russian power was on the Eurasian land mass, it would always have only a tenuous claim to power on the high seas.

World War I offered little opportunity for the Russian Navy to carry out missions like those of traditional seapowers. In any case, the Russian Navy was ill-prepared for more than a tangential role. The fleets of Britain, Germany, France, and Japan were all far superior to the Tsar's navy. In fact, Russian shipbuilding had fallen so far behind that Russian troops transported from Darien in the East to the Western front in 1916 had to be carried in Japanese ships.⁵

Characteristically, alliance with more traditional seapowers kept Russia from confronting alone the overwhelming superiority of the German Navy. Only a limited and largely defensive role was possible for the Russian Navy in a conflict that was definitely "continental" from the Russian perspective. In the Baltic a clearly defensive posture was assumed; the greatest successes were achieved with mines, a purely defensive naval weapon. In the Black Sea, still not a high-seas operating area by any means but at least one where opposing German forces had to cope with longer lines of communication, the Russian Navy had somewhat more freedom of maneuver. The Black Sea and its littoral was, however, primarily a defensive area for the Russians and the five Russian battleships there saw little significant action.

The two revolutions toward the end of the War which resulted in a dramatic change of political systems had little to do with the perception that naval power simply was not critical to Russia. The Red Navy that was to emerge under the Bolsheviks was not to enjoy greater attention and resources even though the credentials of the Navy as a revolutionary element were impeccable.⁶ Once the new regime got over an initial, giddy period in its attitude toward military forces, long-standing doctrinal precepts, and many former imperial officers, reemerged to dominate Soviet military doctrine. The First World War and the Civil War which followed in Russia justified the opinion that any Russian resources devoted to the Navy would have been better spent on forces for defense of Russian territory. A military doctrine historically dominated by ground forces officers was bound to be solidified by experiences where the very survival of Russia, and of the new regime in power, depended upon events on the ground.

Thus, the new Soviet leadership inherited a military doctrine which, as far as naval forces were concerned, was influenced by a basic fact of life: Russia had never had the choice of a naval weapon when a life-or-death duel was in the offing. Naval forces might have peripheral, defensive functions in conflict, and they might enter into peacetime maneuverings and calculations, but they were not considered central in Soviet military doctrine. This mind-set certainly was exhibited as late as Khrushchev's heyday and may still be forcefully put forward at times in the Soviet decisionmaking process. But clearly, there have been some changes in the last six decades that have given the Soviet Navy a more respected place in overall Soviet military doctrine.

The Interwar Period: Doctrinal Uncertainty and Economic Necessity

The 1920's and 1930's provide some interesting Soviet naval history, and yield some glimpses into the evolution of nuclear age Soviet military and naval doctrine. It may be that whatever doctrinal conclusions made under the aegis of Stalin before World War II were overtaken by the events of that war and the subsequent dawning

of the nuclear age. But the fact that there were two contending schools of thought on the best naval strategy for the Soviet Union between the wars shows that, even given general acceptance of a continental orientation for Soviet military strategy, differing views on the kind of navy required could exist.⁷

There was an "Old School Strategy" which would have guarded the maritime approaches to the Soviet Union in the manner of a traditional great seapower. The proponents of this school would have built battleships and cruisers with an eye to exercising command of the seas, at least at the Soviet periphery. Though they understood the geopolitical and practical military limitations which had prevented Russia from becoming a true seapower, the Old School strategists would have adapted the dictums of classical seapower adherents, like Colomb and Mahan, to Soviet needs.

Opposing the more traditional approach was a "New School" which would have relied upon lighter naval forces such as fast patrol craft, destroyers, submarines, and land-based aircraft. Proponents of this school of thought would have secured the maritime approaches to the USSR not by offensive strikes aimed at destroying the enemy force and seizing command of the sea, but by denying any potential enemy the ability to gain command for himself.

It does not seem that there was any effective voice for a truly "blue water" navy. Geography, history and tradition, combined with economic necessities, precluded such views as far as we know. It does appear as if Stalin, and presumably the Ground Forces hierarchy that survived the purges and the war, preferred a more conventional, i.e., Old School, approach tailored to fit a continentally oriented Soviet military doctrine.

Economics, in any case, dictated naval construction akin to what New School proponents favored until about the mid-1930's. Beginning with the Second Five-Year Plan (January 1933 to April 1937), Stalin devoted more resources to modernizing battleships and building cruisers. The Third Five-Year Plan begun in 1937 stepped up the emphasis upon capital ships.⁸ Since it was too late to be ready for the Second World War, history did not record the efficacy of Stalinist Naval Strategy, however one might choose to describe that strategy.

The Great Patriotic War

The Second World War did nothing to encourage proponents of Soviet seapower. Even Soviet naval spokesmen, who miss no chance to glorify the navy's history, cannot always make very much of the navy's role in World War II:

Question: Can you please recount the main missions carried out by the Soviet Navy in the Great Patriotic War?

Answer: The outcome of the War was decided, to be sure, on land fronts. Therefore, the main mission of the Navy was to provide assistance. . . .

From an interview with Admiral Gorshkov.⁹

The Soviet Navy, of course, fought valiantly in the war. In terms of lessons learned for future Soviet military policy, however, it was a question not of how mightily the navy struggled but of the kind of struggle to which they contributed, and of the significance of their efforts to the final victory. Close-in defense and amphibious operations (where Gorshkov himself gained fame) were the navy's main contributions. The official version of the history of the war emphasizes the Soviet view that conflict on the oceans and sea lines of communication was not the vital part of the war. Conflict on the ground at the Soviet German Front was decisive, in the Soviet view.¹⁰

Admiral Gorshkov and other authoritative spokesmen tirelessly draw upon the experience of the Second World War for specific lessons on the use of particular types of naval forces, and they highlight wherever possible the Soviet Navy's contribution to the struggle. But the basic lesson learned in the war was reaffirmation of past lessons: the life-or-death struggle was clearly the continental one,¹¹ and Soviet Naval contributions in such a struggle were peripheral and supportive.

Stalin's Postwar Years and the Dawn of the Nuclear Age

An entirely new age in military affairs was dawning in 1945. Continental powers and seapowers would both become intercontinental military powers. There were bound to be nuclear-age implications for Soviet naval policy that would transcend the lessons learned even in the two World Wars, but they were not clear. Two and one-half centuries of naval history and three wars in four decades left an uncertain naval heritage. Still, Stalin was not unsympathetic to naval construction and must have had some inkling that an important maritime role was possible in the new political-military environment that was to evolve. But even Stalin, at the pinnacle of his power, could not clearly discern the horizons of Soviet naval power.

The war seemed to have confirmed that seapower was not a decisive element in Soviet military posture, and strategic nuclear offensive and defensive naval roles were not envisioned immediately after the war. From an offensive point of view, a powerful Soviet fleet was completely unjustified. Even the most ambitious expenditure of resources would not overcome basic geographic limitations in time of war. History had just dictated a stern lesson to the USSR about the military utility of capital ships. From a defensive point of view, huge surface ships were not worth the expense; *small boats and submarines could deny the enemy control of coastal communications more safely and cheaply—especially if land-based air cover could be provided.* In short, the classic elements of seapower, as viewed by the world's maritime powers, simply did not fit into the purely military considerations of immediate postwar Soviet power.

While recent history weighed heavily on purely military considerations, a longer view of Russian naval history might have revealed a message in the realm of politics. Below the highest levels of hostility, navies can play an important role in international politics. At times when greater maritime powers were unable or disinclined to enforce geographic limitations to restrict Russian naval forces to their territorial seas, the Soviet Navy could help extend Russian power. As the ultimate levels of conflict became more and more unacceptable for all concerned,

this inherently limited scope of operations widened. The last two world wars could only have increased the unwillingness of other powers to resort to the highest levels of conflict, and the atomic bomb already showed signs of making the big war too horrible to be acceptable.

Whether or not this change in the environment for naval power was perceived, it soon became clear that the experience of the war would not completely dominate naval policy. There would be contradictory indicators of the navy's position in the turmoil of postwar domestic politics, but the military as a whole experienced this in the postwar Stalinist period. The international political situation was in flux, too. One clear aspect of the changing alignment of powers in the world was the fact that the major maritime powers were emerging as the forces most antagonistic to the Soviet Union. Precious treasure could not be devoted to any crash building program during the recovery from the war, but there could be an important role for the navy. The building of a very impressive submarine force would absorb the bulk of the immediate material expenditure devoted to the navy, but this did not have to close the door completely on more traditional naval units. In such times, it was best to keep options open.

On Navy Day in July 1945, Stalin himself made it clear that the Navy--the "loyal helpmate of the Red Army" in the war--would occupy an important place in his postwar plans and policies.¹² Old shipyards would be rehabilitated and new ones would be built. Other important figures also made it clear that the navy would have a significant claim on scarce resources.¹³

The nature of the Soviet shipbuilding program became evident within 2 or 3 years after the war. Battleships were considered obsolete. In spite of a rumor that a huge new ship was being built, the only battleships in the Soviet order of battle were two aging pre-World War I ships and one given to the USSR in 1944 by Britain. Clearly, the Russians were going to concentrate their surface construction efforts on a few cruisers and a large number of smaller, faster vessels. Submarine building was proceeding apace. In addition to the three old light cruisers and the newer KIROV class ships which survived the war, the Soviets had completed three new KIROVs by 1947 and fitted them out with more modern fire control and radar equipment. This class of ship, undergunned and with a low fuel capacity, was completed at the rate of about one per year. This fairly limited surface shipbuilding effort also included the construction of several light STREMITELNI class destroyers. About fifty of these units, combined with ten surviving LENINGRAD class ships and a number of older vessels obtained through reparations and lend-lease, formed a modest, but growing, destroyer force.

By 1947, the direction, if not the intensity, of naval development in the postwar Stalinist years had been established. There would be a great deal of speculation about the emergence of Soviet battleships and aircraft carriers, but this was not to be. If Stalin thought of "balancing" his fleet's fighting capabilities with surface ships as well as submarines, the military uses of the fleet he was creating were defensive ones in terms of conflict with any major maritime power. Whether or not he desired or intended to give his navy a more credible offensive capability once he had the smaller units completed and a defensive posture guaranteed (as he did in the late 1930's) is not clear.

In his final 5 years, there were some indications, as in the late 1930's, that Stalin was seeking to build a more substantial conventional navy. Soviet shipyards and the shipbuilding industries received considerable attention and were better prepared for a more extensive effort by about 1948. The submarine building program was stepped up at about that time and a new class of destroyer, the SKORY, was introduced.¹⁴ Construction of five cruisers was begun before the war were completed and the new SVERDLOV light cruiser class was planned in the late 1940's. Work on the latter class probably began sometime in 1949. Only six were completed by Stalin's death in March 1953.

If Stalin planned a modern high-seas fleet that could vie with the other great maritime powers, the plan died with him. Still, his naval legacy was considerable given the obvious limitations on naval roles for the USSR as understood at the time in a distinctly continental, ground-forces-dominated military establishment. As in the 1930's, economic realities militated against expensive naval construction as well. The Soviet Navy in 1953 was, to be sure, a force capable primarily of the defense of the USSR's maritime approaches and did not hold a credible claim for "command" of the seas in a hot war—but it was the third largest navy in the world.

Stalin's heirs were left with over 500 ships and submarines. Many were old and battle-worn, and nearly three-quarters of the force (370 out of 514) were submarines. There were no aircraft carriers and only 3 old battleships. Twenty cruisers, 83 destroyers, and 38 destroyer escorts and frigates were in commission. This force, obviously one not pretending to play the role of a traditional seapower, showed no signs of changing the nature of its composition. Six cruisers and 100 submarines were under construction.¹⁵

Khrushchev: Discovering the Revolution

After Stalin's death, there were many longstanding ideas subjected to intense scrutiny. Military thought, like social, economic and cultural thought, had been so thoroughly dominated by Stalin that his death left a vacuum that was bound to admit some new views. Stalin's military ideas had been too firmly rooted in the past to allow acceptance of the fundamental changes called for by the blossoming technological revolution in military affairs. The Soviet Union made progress in the development of new weaponry, but Soviet military thought was based primarily on the experience of the Soviet Union in World War II. Stalin had emphasized that "permanently operating factors" (such as morale, quality and quantity of forces, ability of commanders, stability of the rear areas, and other traditional military criteria) remained dominant over such "transitory" advantages as might be yielded by a surprise nuclear attack.¹⁶

Doctrinal ferment in the first few years after Stalin's death was the result of efforts to break the Stalinist mold.¹⁷ Because it stressed traditional forms of military power, Stalinist military thought was a refuge for traditional institutional interests. The spokesmen for those interests were reluctant to promote a qualitative revolution which would sap the resources and even the logic for maintenance of huge conventional forces. But the realities of thermonuclear

deterrence were even more compelling. The main opponent of the Soviet Union was not even within range of conventional armed force, and that opponent was ahead in the development of the new weaponry and its means of delivery.

It was not only a time of transition in military policy, it was a transition period in the development of military hardware as well. Institutional momentum and the need to preserve an image of massive military power during this interim era would mitigate the challenge to more conventional forms of power. But the challenge was a fundamental one, and it had its naval component:

The age-old struggle between old concepts and new ones, which had still not been proven, made its harsh appearance in the course of the discussions which developed with respect to ways in which to develop our Navy in the mid-1950's. Some of the views expressed at the time were extremely "leftist." We had among us, unfortunately, some extremely influential "authorities" who felt that, with the appearance of atomic weapons, the Navy had completely lost its significance as a branch of the armed services. . . . A frequent assertion of the time was that single missiles placed on land launchers would be sufficient for destroying strike dispositions of surface warships and even submarines.¹⁸

It was clear that the salvation of the traditional military concepts lay in their ability to assimilate the new ones. The nuclear level of deterrence had overwhelming priority and it was the strategic offensive roles which were most prized.¹⁹ The capability of applying or showing limited force in a flexible and mobile manner was discounted during this period when the effects of the nuclear revolution were being felt initially at the highest levels of conflict. Though the various armed forces would never completely yield the position that final victory must be won by ground soldiers and conventional means, the 1950's after Stalin's death were a time when attention and resources had to be devoted to assimilating the implications of the nuclear age. In 1956 Admiral Gorshkov reflected the adjustment to nuclear age realities, and gave a hint of the challenge felt by proponents of conventional forces when he said ". . . the next war will differ from all previous wars. . . . with the massive employment of rocket weapons and . . . means of mass destruction. . . . However, this does not diminish the decisive importance of the ground Army, the fleet and aviation." Gorshkov demonstrated that he saw broad implications for the Navy, when he noted that the new technology caused naval theaters to be of ". . . immeasurably more importance than formerly" and that ". . . the fleet must fully correspond to the conditions of the newest technology."²⁰

Khrushchev had definite, and negative, ideas about the utility of traditional naval forces. As he consolidated his position atop the decisionmaking apparatus, he tried to impose more forcefully his view that strategic nuclear weaponry obviated much of the need for conventional forces, especially for expensive naval units which he felt were anomalies in the nuclear age. In a message to President Eisenhower about the 1958 Taiwan Straits crisis, Khrushchev made clear his opinion of the value of classic naval power to contemporary nuclear superpower:

Does it not seem to you, Mr. President, that such dispatch of warships now in one direction now in another, loses today much of its sense at least with respect to the countries possessing modern weapons? I do not know what your military advisors tell you, but it seems to us they cannot but know that the heyday of surface Navy power is over. In the age of nuclear and rocket weapons of unprecedented power and rapid action, these once formidable warships are fit, in fact, for nothing but courtesy visits and gun salutes, and can serve as targets for the right types of rockets. This may hurt the pride of the people closely connected with the Navy, but these are the incontestable facts and one cannot ignore them.²¹

And, during his visit to the United States a year later:

I'll tell you a secret. We were starting to build a big fleet of ships, including many cruisers. But today they are outmoded. Cruisers have a very short range. They are enormously expensive. We are scrapping 90 to 95 percent of our cruisers, including some that were just on the verge of being commissioned. From now on we will rely mainly on submarines.²²

Khrushchev's disdain for the conventional aspects of naval power and his support for the nuclear-missile role of the submarine were products of his general desire to rely upon nuclear weapons. Toward 1957, as Khrushchev's general views on military strategy became more dominant, they assumed their specific form.²³ Khrushchev proudly included the navy's nuclear deterrent role in his public statements of Soviet military power. Though Khrushchev often advertised submarine missile strength far in excess of what he could call upon,²⁴ his attitude was a clear sign to the navy that its future depended on its ability to seek out means for and justify the application of nuclear and missile technology to naval armament.

The Soviet Navy's expression of the emerging party line on naval development continued to contain elements of strong sympathy for more conventional applications of naval power. Authors acknowledged that "naval science has begun a new period" but warned of errors "arising as a result of a preconceived overevaluation of this or that new means of attack or defense."²⁵ However, in spite of clear feelings of the need for caution in order to avoid the extremes of Khrushchevian logic in military affairs, the general tenor of the press was one of acceptance of basic changes in the Navy.

By 1957, obsolete warships were being scrapped at an increasing rate and the personnel and resources needed for their maintenance were being diverted to the kind of forces, naval and non-naval, that Khrushchev clearly favored. The merchant oceanographic and fishing fleets, which to this day are vital elements of Soviet politicomilitary strategy, began in the mid-1950's to draw shipbuilding and other resources away from the Soviet Navy.

Sometime in 1957, the Soviets began concentrating on construction of nuclear submarines that had been planned earlier. The new cruisers which had survived the recent period of less decisive naval policy were fairly safe. In spite of his startling statements, no one expected Khrushchev to scrap these expensive ships. After all, the logic of missile armament in the nuclear age could be applied to these impressive-looking ships as well as to "mosquito" craft. Such ships, armed with missiles, could help to counter the Western carrier which temporarily was viewed as the main strategic threat to be coped with by the Soviet Navy. And surely Khrushchev noted that large naval units played significant roles in Lebanon and Taiwan in spite of the validity of claims that such forces were not decisive in a military sense. If Khrushchev did not feel a need to hedge his bet because of such considerations, the economic facts were enough to warrant the maintenance of at least the newer major surface units. In any case, he did not scrap 95 percent of them as he said he would.

At the end of the 1950's, the Soviet Navy reflected the many forces that had impinged upon it. The sheer momentum of Stalinist construction, the tenacity of more traditional naval thinkers while Khrushchev gathered strength, and a genuine effort to assimilate new technology all aided Soviet naval construction. The strategic threat posed by US aircraft carriers and the opportunities offered by potential strategic offensive and defensive missions, especially for submarines, were great boons to the navy because they were in harmony with Khrushchev's preoccupation with the impact of strategic nuclear weapons on military strategy.

In the 1959 order of battle there were 35 cruisers, over two-thirds of which were well under 10 years old. Eleven cruisers, the CHAPAEVS and KIROVS, were ships of World War II design, some of which had been completed in the postwar 1940's. The Soviet destroyer force had been extensively replenished. Many of these were the newer SKORY, KOTLIN, and TALLINN classes, and more were under construction. Relatively light surface units, undoubtedly justified as classic defensive naval forces, seemed to be thriving. There were 66 RIGA and KOLA class ships already in the fleet, and a trend toward innovating and experimenting with small and highly maneuverable units had been established.

The Soviet submarine force was on the threshold of the nuclear age in terms of both its propulsion and main weapon systems. One unit was near completion and at least two more were fairly close. Much of the submarine construction facilities was being diverted to nuclear construction. Meanwhile, the Soviets could boast of the largest conventional submarine force in the world. Its nearly 500 units ranged from the large ocean-going WHISKEY class to the tiny "M-IV" coastal type, but the vast majority of them were obsolete or obsolescent. A new trend had been set in Soviet submarines even before the partial shift to nuclear construction began. The

170 ZULU and WHISKEY classes were bigger and capable of long-range operations. Missile armament had passed through the preliminary stages during the evolution of these units. Most importantly, it was becoming clearer that submarines would have a significant nuclear attack role. This role required a much more modern submarine force than the Soviets had maintained throughout the 1950's. There was increasingly less justification for the maintenance of huge numbers of obsolete submarines, but there was also a clear demand for new replacements.

In numbers of units, the Soviet Navy entering the 1960's was second only to the US Navy. Yet, it was a navy far more impressive for its potential than for its capabilities. The trends toward highly maneuverable, missile-armed surface units and nuclear-missile submarines were far more significant than the collection of forces which the Soviet Navy had amassed by the end of the 1950's.

Whatever might have been the Stalinist naval "thesis," the emerging "antithesis" of his heir reflected a different world with different opportunities and dangers. Stalin, firmly in power, might have found it much easier to view conventional naval power as a useful instrument in various kinds of hostility with "the other camp" in spite of the possibilities of nuclear conflict and traditional geopolitical limitations. Khrushchev, striving to keep control at a time when domestic and international politics were becoming increasingly unruly and fragmented, was bound to be more skeptical even if strategic nuclear considerations and missile technology had not raised questions about traditional notions of seapower. It is not surprising that Khrushchev and his entourage did not produce a positive naval "doctrine" in the 1950's. To the extent that a clearer direction for the evolution of the navy was discernible in 1959, it was a direction defined secondarily by Khrushchev's attitude toward strategic nuclear war and continental defense. The trends in Soviet naval development were still not the product of any clear appreciation of either the potential or the limits of Soviet seapower in the nuclear age.

The Early Sixties: Khrushchev's "New Look"

It was typical of Khrushchev that he would try to push his notions on military policy to their logical extreme. In some ways, this was to be a blessing to the Soviet Navy, but not in all respects. A strong emphasis on strategic offensive and defensive missions was an enormous benefit to new submarine programs and it helped to focus attention away from the diminishing strategic threat from aircraft carriers and on the new challenges posed by intercontinental-range ballistic missile submarines. However, the preoccupation with strategic nuclear offense and defense did nothing at the time to promote a better understanding of the political uses of naval power, or its utility at low levels of conflict.

It is also typical of the Khrushchev era that, while his notions and schemes left a permanent mark on the future, they were seldom wholly accepted or thoroughly put into practice. This was the case with Khrushchev's attempt to rely on strategic nuclear weaponry at the expense of the conventional military establishment. He managed to finalize the basic shift toward a nuclear-missile Navy, but he did not manage to close the door completely upon the evolution of a large and wide-ranging Soviet Navy comprised of an impressive variety of ships.

On 14 January 1960, Khrushchev made a landmark speech to the USSR Supreme Soviet.²⁶ His plans for the Soviet military had much in common with Eisenhower's 1953 "New Look" for the American military establishment. The vast majority of attention and resources assigned to the Soviet military would be devoted to maintaining and improving the nation's rocket-nuclear capabilities. A huge demobilization of troops and the creation of a new branch of the armed services, the Strategic Rocket Forces, made it clear that Khrushchev's preference for nuclear-missile forces at the expense of conventional types of armament was now being expressed with authority.

That the firm statement of Khrushchevian policy in 1960 was a significant hardening of the evolution of Soviet military forces and not a simple extension of an existing trend is frequently ignored in later Soviet accounts. Perhaps this is because the "New Look" line would never be totally accepted and because the logic of nearly complete reliance upon nuclear deterrence would be further eroded by events during the remainder of Khrushchev's tenure. However, the "New Look" had an especially lasting effect on the future of the Soviet Navy. The naval forces that would be justified within the framework of the prevailing ideas of the first quarter of the decade would be the forces in existence when the ideas began to change.

There was a reserved but subtly cool treatment of Khrushchev's policies in the military press which reflected fears among military leaders that reliance on a nuclear deterrent would be carried to the extreme of limiting the nation's ability to act at times when more conventional applications of force were needed. There was a naval component of this resistance to the Khrushchev line but, from the Soviet Navy's point of view, it was a very practical matter. If the entire military faced cuts, the navy could expect to press successfully only its most persuasive arguments. It behooved the navy to embrace with a vengeance the nuclear and missile roles to which it could lay claim. The image of a Soviet Navy "undergoing a profound qualitative transformation"²⁷ was one which would best exploit the possibilities for naval appropriations in the early 1960's.²⁸

Submarines were the kind of naval weapon which best fit into Khrushchevian military logic. The very heavy emphasis of Khrushchev's "New Look" upon strengthening the Soviet nuclear deterrent and his tendency to lean so heavily on his nuclear credibility gave the Soviet submarine force a significant claim on military resources and on pride of place among all Soviet armed forces.

Surface ship construction occupied a peculiar place in the early 1960's. The emerging strategic offensive and defensive missions for submarines at long ranges from the USSR would provide some justification for surface units. Also, to the extent that the carrier was seen as a strategic threat, the increasing strike range of Western carrier aircraft had made questionable the assumption that surface ships carrying surface-to-surface missiles needed only to be short-range, light ships. Justification for surface combatants had to be tailored to fit the logic of Khrushchev's "New Look" notions about the role of the navy, but there were viable arguments for them, in spite of Khrushchev's disdain for surface ships. Khrushchev's own strong endorsement for missile armament was, paradoxically, to

be the salvation of surface combatants. The role of missile-armed surface ships would be shifted from an anticarrier emphasis to antisubmarine warfare and missiles would also help in improving surface ship survivability.

Thus, as far as Soviet naval forces were concerned, the New Look was as much a boon as a bane. After the Kennedy administration took office in January 1961, the Soviet Navy became in addition the beneficiary of a new Soviet appreciation of the challenge posed by the United States.²⁹ Well before the Cuban missile crisis, when Soviet strategic and naval inferiority was driven home before world public opinion, Soviet policymakers were absorbing the implications of the new administration's resolve to press hard to develop strategic nuclear weapons. One product of this post-Sputnik US resolve was a sharply accelerated Polaris submarine program, a program that was bound to strengthen the arguments of those who were pressing for a major Soviet naval role in strategic defense and attack.

The early 1960's, instead of highlighting the irrelevance of naval power for a continental power, provided a promising atmosphere for development. Obviously, missiles had to be developed. Soviet nuclear missile submarines (SSBN's) had to be produced. To be effective, both strategic offensive and defensive missions would have to be carried out by a variety of ships operating at greater distances from home. None of this meant that the USSR was pretending to change from a continental power to a seapower of traditional stripe. There was nothing traditional about it. It was new. A naval doctrine suitable for a great continental power that was to become an intercontinental superpower was not formulated, but some of the hardware that was to support such a doctrine was programmed.

Toward the Seventies: Grasping the Impact of Change

A shift toward forward deployment and a more ambitious naval construction program were in hand before Khrushchev was deposed in October 1964. However, the change that was taking place was more fundamental and sweeping than a shift in naval policy. It was unlikely, in fact, that Soviet naval policy would change significantly except in the context of broader change.

A political, social, and economic offensive, buttressed by an exaggerated image of Soviet nuclear attack capabilities, were the hallmarks of Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence." Brezhnev's "relaxation of tensions" would rely on no illusions. The ideological, economic, and sociological appeal of the Soviet model was waning and, as in the past, Russia looked westward to gain the economic elements of modernization. The substance of military power, conventional and nuclear, was to be the cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy. It was as a military power that the Soviet Union was recognized as a superpower.

Khrushchev's New Look was necessary, but not sufficient. On the Eurasian land mass the Soviet Union would accept nothing less than domination of the military balance. Equality with the United States in intercontinental nuclear forces was an absolute necessity, and superiority was desirable. In the US-Soviet strategic nuclear relationship, under the rubric of detente, negotiations with the

Americans and careful management of the competition in high technology were necessary in order to determine the limits of Soviet nuclear superpower status, but there was no question that profound change was taking place in the relationship between political and military power. There was to be a very great impact on Soviet naval policy. The navy of an intercontinental nuclear superpower had to be viewed differently than the navy of a continental power, no matter how large, which had only restricted access to the high seas.

Intercontinental nuclear attack capabilities obviously had first priority. For the Soviet Navy this meant an all-out effort had to be devoted to construction of the YANKEE class SSBN. Submarines equipped with cruise missiles and antisubmarine submarines, though also viewed as important, were put on a slower schedule. Similarly, major missile-equipped surface combatants, the KYNDA, KASHIN, and KRESTA classes, were produced at a quite measured pace.³⁰ The first Soviet antisubmarine helicopter carrier, the MOSKVA, which represented Soviet willingness to devote considerable resources to surface ships for strategic defensive purposes, began building in about 1964. MOSKVA conducted her sea trials in July 1967.

Meanwhile, the Soviet leadership began to grasp the full impact of the nuclear age for Soviet naval policy. Along with the many other fruits of nuclear superpower status, the Soviet Union acquired limited license for the exercise of "traditional" naval power. Perhaps a "war at sea" disconnected from Soviet vital interests in Eurasia would not be a reasonable option that could be underwritten by Soviet nuclear striking power, but more limited displays of naval power were surely viable policy alternatives. "Showing the Flag" was certainly appropriate for a nuclear superpower. So was naval support of friendly Third World regimes or groups. In fact, a whole range of lower-level naval activity was opening up. As the Soviet Navy moved farther out to sea in an attempt to carry out strategic offensive and defensive missions, this new range of politicomilitary options became clearer.³¹

Naval power, a limited display of national will and power embodied in a ship or squadron, had long been a means of projecting influence and authority in both times of peace and times of tension. As limited forms of power, naval units require visibility for local effect. To have maximum impact upon events, limited forces must be credibly connected with the entire arsenal of the nation's diplomatic and military tools. Otherwise, they can be isolated or neutralized, leaving the parent state without their capability and discredited in the bargain. Russian naval forces had always been "disconnected" from the ultimate will and capabilities of the homeland, and so Russian seapower remained a tenuous instrument of national policy. Russia had, therefore, been denied that large spectrum of influence which exists even before a conflict situation occurs. Soviet seapower in the 1960's began to claim that significant spectrum of influence.

Though some Soviet naval units, especially submarines in the late 1950's, had operated on the high seas earlier, the Soviet Navy did not begin to appear consistently and for sustained periods on the high seas until 1963.³² In that year extensive Soviet naval deployments to the Mediterranean began and initiated what was to become a permanent presence there that would grow until about 1976. The

initial phase of forward deployment lasted until about the time MOSKVA and the YANKEE SSBN's began to appear. Since 1967 the Soviet Navy has expanded its high seas presence sufficiently that it is now common to speak of the Soviet "blue water" Navy.

It is not necessary here to spell out all the details of the Soviet Navy's projection of a global image. That has been done well elsewhere.³³ It is important, however, to note the impact of the Soviet move to the high seas. The rationale behind the initial move was no doubt in terms of specific strategic missions, but the impact extends beyond the nuclear level of conflict into the realm of politics. In terms of global perceptions, for example, the record of Soviet and US deployments away from home shores during the first decade of the Brezhnev regime is important. Soviet distant operations increased from 6,500 to 52,800 ship-days,³⁴ while US distant operations decreased from 109,500 to 61,300 ship-days. Obviously, crisp distinctions between "continental powers" and "seapowers" were a thing of the past as far as global perceptions, if not combat at sea, are concerned.

The Soviet leadership, as they sent their ships to sea, perceived the impact of Soviet global naval operations and this raised their esteem for the political importance of a naval presence. Also, they did not fail to grasp the fact that they could now share a traditional preserve of their primary adversary, and at times deny him the full use of power he had exercised unfettered before the Soviet Navy put to sea. After all, the United States was by no means a continental power and yet had acted freely under its nuclear umbrella and in concert with its NATO allies to deny the USSR the full benefit of its "natural" dominance on the continent. Why should not the USSR act under its own nuclear umbrella, and with the protection of the well-established doctrine of freedom of the seas, to deny the United States the full benefit of a "natural" claim to dominate the oceans?

After the fall of Khrushchev, there was growing recognition of the fact that the capability to "command" the seas was not as relevant as it had been in the past. Though in the past competing seapowers sought to completely dominate the seas and deny their use to an adversary in a conflict where the primary issue could be settled at sea, this way of looking at naval power was no longer quite as valid. In nuclear war, naval theaters might well be secondary. Short of nuclear war, the ability to deny a traditional naval power the command of the seas might be sufficient for the USSR. The Soviets seemed to understand that the maximum utility of the Soviet Navy would not be realized in an attempt to challenge the United States for the capability to win an all-out duel at sea, but rather in the Soviet ability to deny the United States its traditional defense through control of the oceans. United States ability to thoroughly dominate the seas, Gorshkov said in 1965, "had been reduced to nothing".³⁵ Gorshkov was exaggerating his own capabilities at the time, but it was becoming clear that the denial of US capabilities was being recognized as an important function of the Soviet Navy that was not only applicable in intercontinental nuclear war.

There was growing Soviet appreciation of Western naval capabilities to act at lower levels of tension and in local conflicts. The fact that US and British naval activity was usually unopposed was noted often with displeasure. In localized and

limited situations where lesser concentrations of naval forces were employed, sea lanes were depicted as "important tools of colonial politics and aggression by the imperialist states." It was at more limited levels of conflict where the "completely free use of the sea lanes by the United States Navy" was being exploited. Of course, when "local" conflicts tended to get more serious as they did in Korea or Vietnam, the significance of the United States ability to move with absolute impunity, without even a credible threat of opposition, was greater.³⁶

The political impact of United States naval presence without the necessity of actual intervention was appreciated by the Soviets as one of the most prized effects of US naval deployment. Fleet Admiral Kasatonov noted in 1966 that US naval construction and maintenance programs reflected the high value which the United States was placing upon the capability to exploit the freedom of the seas for the conduct of "local" and "limited" operations. Kasatonov also noted that the United States, specifically the Chief of Naval Operations, valued the flexibility and mobility of the navy not only for the times it was actually employed in "crisis situations and conflicts" but also for the "majority of cases when strike groups of the fleet were transferred to areas of 'unrest' in good time even before political decisions were made."³⁷

There were in the 1960's frequent accounts of the actual deployment of naval forces to enforce United States policy and these accounts did not fail to point out that such actions were taken with impunity because they were unopposed. According to one author, "the most prominent characteristic of the utilization of naval forces by the aggressor in local wars has been the fact that surface ships have conducted them without being seriously opposed. . . ."³⁸ From the Soviet point of view, the United States was monopolizing the concept of freedom of the seas and the lack of an offsetting presence on the high seas was an enormous political advantage to the rival superpower.

New license for expression of naval power was being engendered by nuclear superpower status in the 1960's. At the same time the limits of intercontinental nuclear striking power as an instrument of policy were beginning to be understood. Though it would be a long time, and perhaps never, before the Soviet leadership would have "enough" strategic power for their purposes, it was already apparent that direct competition and potential conflict between the superpowers had to be limited to reasonable levels and less awesome instruments if their policies were not to be hopelessly bound by their capability for mutual destruction. Movement across land expanses has become even more difficult and dangerous in modern times, so the principle of freedom of the seas, a right to move and be present on three-quarters of the globe and at the doorstep of the majority of the world's states, had new meaning as a form of Russian national expression.

The Soviet Navy offered a new kind of expansion for a great continental power. Naval forces project the image of national power and presence, but, in the final analysis, they remain the instruments of expansion and not expansion itself. In a world where assimilation of new territories and even the acquisition of allies who are tied too closely to a nation's military power are becoming ever more dangerous and undesirable, the illusion of substantive expansion of national power

can help to satisfy appetites for global expression and serve the imperatives of an expansive ideology. Moreover, to the extent that a limited expression of naval power can be related to the genuine substance of Soviet continental and intercontinental striking power, the distinction between the illusion of expansion and expansion itself is blurred in the relationships of the superpowers and lacks relevance in the minds of the vast majority of mankind.

Though we became accustomed to Soviet pronouncements of the political utility of naval forces in the 1970's, the Soviets understood this utility and discussed it openly in the 1960's. In the Soviet press there was already a growing tendency to recognize the navy as an "instrument of policy" and the Soviets relished the fact that the Western press acknowledged the political impact of the Soviet demands for equality on the seas. One author, for example, stated flatly "when the West writes that the Soviet Fleet has come to be used more often as an 'instrument of policy' then no doubt we agree with this."³⁹ The use of the Soviet Navy to "strengthen the authority and influence of our Homeland in the international arena" and the "great political value" of "carrying the ideas of our peace-loving politics to all ends of the globe,"⁴⁰ were ever more frequently presented as important navy functions in the late 1960's. There was significant attention to the details of port visits, especially to the importance of the impression made upon the host.

That the Soviet leadership had perceived the new opportunities for Soviet naval expression in the 1960's and had seized upon the political utility of denying the exclusive use of the seas to the United States was, in turn, recognized in the West. Western commentators reflected the fact that the naval opportunity for the USSR was more in the realm of influence rather than in the substance of military power. Perceptive observers noted that powerful naval groupings like the United States Sixth Fleet are "militarily far superior, but more and more limited as a political instrument"⁴¹ and that the nonconflict impact of Soviet naval forces can overshadow the advantage that clear military superiority used to have. One British author, referring to the Soviet presence in the Mediterranean in 1969, said:

Mr. Healy, the British Secretary of State for the Defense, has offered to blow them out of the water in the first ten minutes of a war: but what is he going to do with them in the event of ten years of non-war?⁴²

One of the reasons that the Soviet Navy had an impact beyond its combat power is that it served to restrict both the political influence and the military options of a stronger opponent. This was particularly true in the Mediterranean where the Soviet naval presence represented a capability for conflict which, though unlikely to be decisive, would have been extremely difficult to limit to the Mediterranean theater. Naval action which formerly could be taken with impunity in the absence of opposition had become a much more dangerous alternative because a direct clash between United States and Soviet forces was possible, and the threat of uncontrollable escalation was always present. In the Soviet press the Soviet Mediterranean squadron was hailed because it "tied the hands" of the US Sixth Fleet and "removed the possibility of lording it over that area as unceremoniously as in the past."⁴³ It was made clear that the United States could

not act again as it did in the 1958 Lebanon intervention,⁴⁴ and Soviet commentators did not miss the significance of US recognition of the changed relationship.⁴⁵

Thus, in the 1960's, Soviet policymakers had grasped the political as well as the military significance of the nuclear age for Soviet naval power. To be sure, they were building forces whose first task was to serve strategic offensive and defensive missions, but the presence of the Soviet flag abroad was worth something too. Moreover, there was a growing appreciation of the fact that the ability to keep a stronger opponent off balance by making his range of political and military options far less impressive than his potential combat power has significant rewards in the political sphere which add to the impact of the mere presence of the Soviet flag.

The Seventies: Consolidating a Nuclear-Age Posture

The basic outlines of the Soviet nuclear-age Navy were visible at the beginning of the 1970's.⁴⁶ There were 26 cruisers including 2 MOSKVA class aviation cruisers and 8 missile-equipped KRESTA I and KYNDA class cruisers. A total of 100 destroyers, 24 of which carried missiles, were in commission. There were 106 ocean-going frigates and combatant craft ranging from 900 to 1,500 tons displacement, and 125 small missile patrol boats had been built. One hundred sixty-two amphibious ships and craft, 275 coastal escorts and submarine chasers, 345 conventionally armed fast patrol boats, and numerous mine warfare vessels comprised the rest of the surface navy.

The submarine force was huge, as had become traditional by 1970 in the Soviet Navy. There were 303 conventional submarines, but some, the ROMEO, QUEBEC, and WHISKEY classes, were getting quite old. There were already about 66 nuclear submarines in commission. Ten or twelve of these were YANKEE class SSBN's and there were about six new CHARLIE class nuclear submarines equipped with cruise missiles.

This was not by any stretch of the imagination a "traditional" navy. It was by 1970 an assortment of ships that had resulted from changing perceptions of the threat, new realizations of naval opportunities, traditional Russian naval coastal orientation, and economic realities. Still, one could discern the shape of the Soviet Navy that would probably obtain through the remainder of the century. It was to be a Navy for Soviet purposes and not an imitation of any Western concept of seapower. Gorshkov makes this clear:

It is wrong to build a navy in the image and likeness of even the strongest seapower, and it is wrong to define the requirements for building warships for one's own Navy guided only by quantitative criteria and the relative strength of ship inventories. Every country has a specific requirement for naval forces, and only this requirement, determined by the mission of the Navy, can serve as the basis for the development of types of forces, ship types, and weaponry.⁴⁷

The Soviet Navy was not going to pretend to "command" the seas, but it was also not going to permit the United States unfettered action wherever and whenever it chose to act. The Soviet Navy might not solve the seemingly intractable antisubmarine problem posed by SSBN's, but it would keep trying. A large SSBN force of its own, equipped as soon as possible with missiles that could be launched from near the Eurasian periphery, had already been decided upon. Domination of the close maritime approaches to the USSR was a "given" for Soviet policymakers and budgeteers. As much as possible, whenever it could be spared from potential combat missions, the Soviet Navy would be used to project the image of Soviet power abroad.

In terms of total number of units, the Soviet Navy would not grow much beyond the level already reached by the beginning of the 1970's, but there was still progress to be made in modernizing the navy in the directions clearly established. For example, between 1970 and 1977 ⁴⁸ there would be a net gain in cruisers caused by the introduction of missile units, including the new 10,000-ton KARA class, faster than old units were being retired. In the destroyer inventory, there was a gain of 29 missile-armed units against a loss of 17 obsolete units. The first of the KIEV class carriers was introduced to complement the two MOSKVA ASW class ships. Fifteen smaller combatants with missiles and twenty without missiles were added, but over three hundred obsolete short-range surface units were stricken from the list. The attack submarine force declined by 45 units overall with the loss of 67 obsolete diesel units, but 9 nuclear-powered missile units and 13 nuclear-driven torpedo attack boats were added. Soviet naval aviation had gained 35 BACKFIRE aircraft, a formidable aircraft with a strike radius of 2,500 miles and equipped with antiship missiles. The Soviets added 21 YANKEE and 26 new DELTA class SSBN's.

This was a significant qualitative upgrading that, in the author's opinion, represented the vision of a nuclear-age navy seen a decade ago and the implementation of plans agreed to in the Soviet Union at about the same time that Soviet policymakers decided on how to manage the strategic nuclear relationship with the United States. Writings by Admiral Gorshkov in the 1970's were not attempts to persuade a reluctant audience, but rather were efforts to establish in print that the Soviet Navy had "arrived." After all, the programs noted above were all well in train before Gorshkov's major work, The Sea Power of The State, was published in 1976.

By the last quarter of the 1970's, it was understood in the West that future Soviet naval developments would be aimed at strengthening the range of capabilities already visible, rather than expanding the size of the navy itself. Admiral James L. Holloway III, the Chief of Naval Operations, noted in a statement to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

The size of the Soviet Navy is not expected to change significantly in the next five to ten years; in fact, there may be a slight decrease. Significantly, however, the Soviets are replacing older ships, submarines, and aircraft with new ones which possess much greater power than their predecessors.⁴⁹

Current official statements now at the end of the 1970's indicate that the Soviet Navy is in fact consolidating its position rather than seeking to change it in any basic way. The Secretary of Defense, in his Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1980 noted that "the overall size of the Soviet general purpose naval forces has not changed significantly since last year,"⁵⁰ and the supplement to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Posture Statement for Fiscal Year 1980 summarized recent Soviet naval development cogently as follows:

The number of Soviet ships and submarines which could influence a NATO/Warsaw Pact conflict has not changed significantly in the past decade. However, more capable, versatile, and often innovatively designed ships now fulfill a broad range of operational requirements from the coastal waters of the USSR to all of the world's ocean areas.⁵¹

Future Prospects of the Soviet Nuclear-Age Navy

From what has been said thus far, an estimate of future Soviet naval development is not difficult. It is likely that the Soviet Navy has already "sold" those construction programs which are a logical extension of current clearly visible trends. Naval shipbuilding will continue at the current rate but, because of decommissionings of obsolete units, the overall numbers of units will decline slightly. Significant challenges to the United States in the future will come from the continued qualitative upgrading of the Soviet Navy.⁵²

Specific estimates for future Soviet naval construction have been made by this author elsewhere and will not be repeated in detail here.⁵³ Basically, the Soviets will build more and larger missile-equipped surface ships, including about eight vertical short take-off and landing (V/STOL) carriers. Old units will be retired, but the force of newer missile-armed cruisers will grow to about 70 units. The amphibious force will be upgraded with new units, and some larger ones, as obsolete units are scrapped. General purpose nuclear submarines will increase by about 50 percent as an even larger number of old diesel submarines are scrapped. The number of SSBN's probably will not change very much. Naval aviation will be very significantly improved as a large number of BACKFIRES replace older aircraft.

The prospects for the future depend as much upon US naval developments as upon the future composition of the Soviet Navy. Though the Soviet concept of naval power in the nuclear age remains one dominated by continental and intercontinental military concerns, it is paradoxical that the Soviet Navy seems to have "found itself" in an era of growing Soviet strategic power while support for modernizing the US Navy seems to have faded as US superiority in the strategic nuclear balance was simultaneously eroded.

Intercontinental nuclear power has changed the clear distinctions between continental and sea powers, but it hasn't obliterated the differences. It is absurd to think that a complete reversal might take place, but this may be in the offing. While the reductions in US naval general purpose capabilities have not yet made the US Navy inferior in any potential contest with the Soviet Navy, the future is not

certain. The following statement was made in February 1979 by the US Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Hayward:

My near-term optimism about the Navy is tempered by serious concern over the longer-term trends, should the momentum of past improvements in the Navy's capabilities not be maintained. My recent predecessors testified repeatedly that the long-term trends do not favor the U.S. Navy, and that one can project a point in the not-too-distant future when the trend lines will cross, and we will lose our margin of superiority to a Soviet navy which remains embarked on an aggressive program of expanding its capabilities for maritime operations worldwide.⁵⁴

There was little the United States could do about the new naval options open to the Soviet Union as a nuclear superpower. A great deal of latitude for political use of Soviet naval power, extending into denial and interposition roles vis-a-vis the US Navy, was a new fact of life in the nuclear age. So was a large range of strategic offensive and defensive missions. But there is no more reason for the United States to accept parity, or something less, on the world's oceans than there would be for the Soviet Union to accept US conventional military domination on the continent. If the United States can muster the will to do so, it can remain the world's leading seapower in the nuclear age.

ENDNOTES

1. N. G. Kuznetsov, Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy, "Vernyj strazh morshikh rubezhej" (Reliable guard of the maritime frontiers), Pravda, 25 July 1954.
2. Mairin Mitchell, The Maritime History of Russia (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1949), p. 310. Another fine summary of the limited early maritime history of Russia is in Donald W. Mitchell. A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power (New York: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 1-15.
3. Admiral Gorshkov gives the most authoritative official Soviet version of the Russian naval heritage in his Morskaja Moshch' Gosvdarstva (Sea power of the state) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), pp. 114-203.
4. The high and low points of this history are summarized in my "The Rise of Soviet Naval Power in the Nuclear Age," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard, 1971. pp. 7-67.
5. Mitchell, Maritime History of Russia, p. 323.
6. Even the Navy's good reputation as promoter of the Revolution was soon lost. In March 1921 a sailors' mutiny on Kronshtadt Island had to be put down by Red Army forces.
7. By far the best treatment of these contending schools of thought is in Robert Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy (Annapolis: US Naval Institute Press, 1968), pp. 8-27.
8. "In 1937, the government approved a program for the creation of a large navy for our Motherland, a program which envisioned the construction of all classes of combat ships." Admiral V. A. Kasatonov, Soviet Navy, "Sovetskie vooruzhennnye sily na zashchite zavoevaniju Oktabrya," (The Soviet armed forces in defense of the gains of October), Voennoistoricheskij zhurnal 1 (January 1968): 33.
9. Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union, S. G. Gorshkov, "Flot okeanskij prostorov" (Fleet of oceanic expanses), Sovetskij Voin 24 (December 1967): 2.
10. D. F. Ustinov, et al., Istorija Vtoroj mirovoj voini, 1939-1945 (History of the Second World War, 1939-1945), Volume 9 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1978), p. 356.
11. Gorshkov, Sea Power of the State, p. 203.
12. Cited in Zakharov, "Rech' tovarishcha S. Zakharova" (Speech of Comrade S. Zakharov), Pravda, 20 February 1956.
13. Admiral Kasatonov later recalls that naval building programs had high priority beginning in July, 1945, but he also makes it clear that only relatively inexpensive naval construction was attempted in this period. Kasatonov, "Rech' tovarishcha S. Zakharova," pp. 39-40.

14. The SKORY was much like US WW II destroyers. The first SKORY appeared in 1949. Seventy of them were built.
15. "Professional Notes: USSR," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, January 1954, p. 109.
16. Korotkov, "O razvitii sovetskoj voennoj teorii v poslevoennykh godakh" (On the development of Soviet military theory in post-war years), Voенно-istoricheskij Zhurnal, April 1964, p. 40.
17. H. S. Dinerstein, War and the Soviet Union, rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1962), Chapter Two. Dinerstein delves into the specific statements and events involved in the adjustment of Soviet military policy through the 1950's.
18. S. G. Gorshkov, "Razvitie sovetskogo voenno-morskogo iskusstva" (The development of Soviet naval art), Morskij Sbornik, February 1967, p. 19.
19. Gorshkov recalls that naval construction in the 1950's was dominated by the deterrent effect of the strategic offensive capability. "The course taken was one which required the construction of an oceangoing fleet, capable of carrying out offensive strategic missions." Ibid., p. 20.
20. S. G. Gorshkov, "V zashchitu bezopasnosti Rodiny" (In Defense of the Homeland's Security), Sovetskij Flot, 23 February 1956.
21. "Message from Khrushchev to Eisenhower on Crisis in the Taiwan Strait Area," New York Times, 9 September 1958.
22. M. Higgins, "He /Khrushchev/ Meets Workers at IBM Plant," New York Herald Tribune, 22 September 1959.
23. The 1956-57 turning point in Soviet military strategy is recognized in L. Korotkov, "O razvitii sovetskoj voennoj teorii v poslevoennykh godakh" (On the evolution of Soviet military theory in post-war years), Voенноistoricheskij Zhurnal 4 (April 1964): 44
24. His November 1957 statement that "our submarines can block American ports and shoot into the American interior" was based upon a handful of old conventional submarines equipped with 200-mile cruise missiles of questionable reliability. See "Khrushchev Invites United States to Missile Shooting Match," New York Times, 16 November 1957.
25. N. Pavlovich, "Voенно-morskoe iskusstvo i razvitija boej tekhniki flota" (Naval art and the development of the combat technology of the navy), Sovetskij Flot, 6 March 1957. See also V. Andrejev, "Morskie i okeanskije soobshchenija v sovremennoj vojne" (Sea and ocean communications in contemporary warfare), Krasnaja Zvezda, 25 April 1957.
26. N. S. Khrushchev, "Razoruzhenie-put'k uprochen iji mira i obespecheniju druzhbu mezhdu narodami: doklad N. S. Khrushcheve na sessi verkhovnogo soveta SSSR" (Disarmament is the way to the consolidation of peace and the ensuring of friendship between peoples: report of N. S. Khrushchev to the USSR Supreme Soviet), Izvestija, 15 January 1960.

27. "Rech' admiral V. A. Kasatonov" (Speech of Admiral V. A. Kasatonov), Sovetskij Flot, 16 January 1960.

28. For specifics of naval construction, including ship types, in the early 1960's, see Kime. "Rise of Soviet Naval Power in the Nuclear Age," pp. 94-99.

29. Michael McGwire, the leading Western writer on Soviet naval matters, has recently underlined the significance of 1961 as a turning point in Soviet perception of the US threat that caused several major policies to be adopted. His arguments spelled out "The Rationale for the Development of Soviet Seapower," an unpublished paper presented to the Triannual Symposium of the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, in Annapolis, Maryland, on 20-22 June 1978.

30. KYNDA production stopped at 4 in 1956. KASHIN was produced at a rate of about 1 a year. KRESTA began building in 1964 and 2 units were produced by 1967.

31. For a model of the utility of Soviet naval power throughout the spectrum of potential conflict, see Steve F. Kime, Soviet Naval Strategy for the 1980's, National Security Affairs Monograph No. 78-3 (Washington, DC: The National Defense University, June 1978), pp. 8, 9.

32. See Kime, "Rise of Soviet Naval Power in the Nuclear Age," pp. 119-160, for a detailed discussion of Soviet naval presence in the 1950's and 1960's.

33. Information on Soviet naval deployment is in Paul J. Murphy, ed., "Trends in Soviet Force Structure," Naval Power in Soviet Policy Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1978), pp. 109-134. This paragraph relies on Murphy's figures.

34. A "ship-day" is one ship operating at sea for one day.

35. Sergei Gorshkov, "The Nuclear Fleet: Goals and Miscalculations," Za Rubezhom 5 (29 January-4 February, 1965): 10.

36. S. I. Filinov, "Vooruzhennaja bor'ba i okeanskije kommunikatsii" (Armed struggle and ocean communications), Morskoj Sbornik, March 1965, pp. 33, 38-41.

37. V. Kasatonov, "Strategija agressii na more" (Strategy of aggression at sea), Izvestija, 9 January 1966.

38. V. Matsulenko, "Lokal'nye voiny imperializma" (Local wars of imperialism), Voenno-istoricheskij Zhurnal, September 1968, p. 44

39. M. Sagateljan, "V nejtral'nykh vodakh" (In neutral waters), Izvestija, 18 October 1969.

40. V. M. Grishanov, interview in Sovetskij Voin, July 1968, p. 2. See also "Kommunisti flota v bor'be za vypolnenie reshenij XXIII S'ezda KPSS (Communists of the navy in the struggle to fulfill the decisions of the Twenty-Third Congress of the CPSU), Morskoj Sbornik, July 1968, pp. 8-9.

41. Paul R. Schratz, "Red Star Over the Southern Sea," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, July 1970, p. 31.
42. T. B. Millar, "The Indian and Pacific Oceans: Some Strategic Considerations," Adelphi Papers, No. 57, (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, May 1969, p. 2.
43. N. P. Nikolaev, "Flag mira na Sredizemnom more" (The flag of peace in the Mediterranean), Morskoj Sbornik, February 1969, p. 31.
44. On 19 November 1969, Pravda pointed out that the West was obviously more limited in the 1969 Lebanon tension that it had been in 1958. Another article stated point-blank that, though there is always a "danger" of US aggression, "the situation in Lebanon, and in the Middle East in general, is different and Washington might find it hard to risk an open armed intervention." D. Volsky, "At the Middle East Crossroads," New Times, 21 April 1970, p. 28.
45. ". . . What is being mourned here is by no means the loss of a 'balance of power,' but the loss of utterly unrestricted freedom to engage with impunity in any dark deeds . . ." N. Smirnov, "Sovetskie korabli na Sredizemnom more" (Soviet ships in the Mediterranean), Krasnaja Zvezda, 12 November 1968.
46. The details of the 1970 Soviet Naval Order of Battle are in my "Rise of Soviet Naval Power in the Nuclear Age," pp. 108-117.
47. Gorshnov, Sea Power of the State, pp. 413, 414.
48. Comparative information between 1970 and 1977 is extracted from John Collins, American and Soviet Military Trends Since the Cuban Missile Crisis (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1978), pp. 97, 265-281.
49. Excerpts from Admiral Holloway's statement appear in Understanding Soviet Naval Developments, 3d edition (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Department of the Navy, January 1978), p. 67.
50. Ibid., p. 90.
51. Ibid., p. 55.
52. Drew Middleton, "Soviet Extends Power of Navy to All Oceans," New York Times, 20 March 1979, p. 7. This article draws upon testimony of Rear Admiral Sumner Shipiro, USN, the Director of US Naval Intelligence to the Sea Power Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. Some of the specifics of current Soviet naval construction, as testified by Admiral Shapiro, also appeared in "America's Challenge at Sea," Aviation Week and Space Technology, 19 March 1979.
53. See Kime, Soviet Naval Strategy for the 1980's, pp. 18-20.
54. Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, "Summary of Statement Concerning the FY80 Military Posture and FY80 Budget of the United States Navy on February 2, 1979," Navy Policy Briefs, February/March 1979, p. 4.